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## The state of cervical cancer screening in Vanuatu: A retrospective analysis 2015-2020

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### Abstract

**Background:** Vanuatu is a lower middle-income country in the Pacific with an incidence of cervical cancer of 100 per 100,000 women. An opportunistic based cervical screening program has existed since 2008, with continuous data collection related to this since 2015.

**Methods:** We analysed all cervical screening data for Vanuatu over a six-year time period, undertaking a descriptive analysis for the data points of number of women screened with cytological and / or HPV screening, the results of both types of screening tests, the rates of treatment of HPV positive or cytological abnormalities found on screening, and incidence of the cervical cancer. Feedback on the challenges or barriers faced during the screening program are described.

**Results:** Data were available from 01/01/2015 through until 31/12/2020. A total of 70081 women were eligible for screening, and 15696 (22.4%) women underwent screening at least once. 13.2% of less than 30 years olds, 33.2% of 30-50 years old, and 15.8% of greater than 50 year olds were screened. 8910 HPV tests were undertaken, with 876 (9.8%) positive. 316 HPV positive cases had a histological assessment with LLETZ; 156 (49.4%) were high grade and 2 (0.6%) were cancer. 13,396 Pap smear tests were done; 315 (2.4%) returned a high-grade result and 226 (1.7%) possible high grade. Overall, 119 cancers were diagnosed from 15696 women screened (0.8%), including 6/3297 (0.2%) less than 30 year olds, 75/10089 (0.7%) 30-50 year olds, 38/2310 (1.6%) of over 50 year olds. Screening coverage varied across the 6 provinces from 8.9% to 31.9% of eligible women.

**Discussion:** One in five eligible Ni-Vanuatu women have undergone cervical screening since 2015, with 7.6 per 1000 women having a malignant result and 40.4 per 1000 women having a high grade or possible high grade result.